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ABSTRACT

An investigation of teacher paperwork sought to determine the relationship between quantity and types of paperwork and the subject taught and school type. A total of 58 teachers logged their paperwork data over 17 days, including information on paperwork activity, category type, whether the work was required or optional, whether it was completed during or after school, amount of time taken to complete the paperwork, and level of difficulty. Analysis of 1,600 hours of paperwork revealed that teacher paperwork includes a great variety of activities, with over 200 different activities reported under 16 categories of paperwork. A total of 100 teachers from four participation school districts (two from New Castle County, Delaware, one from Kent County, Delaware and one from Sussex County, Delaware) were selected for the sample. Time spent on paperwork varied from teacher to teacher. Seven major types of paperwork--classwork, evaluation/grading, homework, report cards, special projects, test development, and school correspondence--accounted for 81 percent of time spent on paperwork. Teacher spent about eight hours each week both during and after the school day doing paperwork. Most difficult types of paperwork were those relating to special education or parents. This report presents detailed analysis of the data as well as implications for teacher education. (CB)

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TEACHER PAPERWORK STUDY:

TYPE, TIME AND DIFFICULTY

STATE OF DELAWARE

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

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TEACHER PAPERWORK STUDY:

TYPE, TIME AND DIFFICULTY

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PREFACE

In August 1986, the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Division of the State Department of Public Instruction was commissioned by the Delaware Educational Productivity Committee to probe the issue of teacher paperwork. Educators have long been concerned about the amount of teacher paperwork. However, little specific information was available since only opinion research in this area had been attempted.

Before any research could occur, the initial step was to define teacher paperwork. The next step was to investigate key questions about the types of paperwork, the source, the complexity and when it is processed. Rather than focussing on opinions about how much paperwork that was done, the study concentrated on the time it actually takes teachers to handle their paperwork burden. The study sought to determine the relationship between quantity and types of paperwork and the subject taught and school type.

In order to study teacher paperwork, it was necessary to enlist the effort of teachers as primary data collectors. In spite of their already crowded schedules, the 58 volunteer teachers accepted the onus of logging their paperwork data. During the 17 day data collection period, teachers logged 1,600 hours of paperwork. Without their cooperation, the information would not have been collected and the study could not have been more detailed than the previous opinion research studies.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

Teacher paperwork has long been considered a valid area of professional concern by teachers and administrators alike. Excessive teacher paperwork is an issue that constantly arises when teachers are surveyed about their satisfaction with various elements of teaching. A recent national study conducted by the Educational Research Service has shown that 47.4% of 1,346 teachers surveyed considered too much required paperwork as a major problem that detracts from their ability to do the best possible job of teaching. Closer to home, a Delaware survey conducted by the University of Delaware's College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy in 1986 reported that 71% of responding teachers were dissatisfied with the amount of time spent on record-keeping and clerical duties.

In the fall of 1985 a grant was awarded by the National Conference of State Legislatures to the Delaware General Assembly to study the anticipated crisis in teacher retention and recruitment. Through this grant a contract was established with the University of Delaware's College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy to study this problem. Results of the study, conducted by Dr. Jeff Raffel in the spring of 1986, were published in Teaching in Delaware: An Analysis of Current and Former Teachers' Views.

Dr. Raffel's Delaware survey found teachers naming salary as the least satisfying teaching element. Clerical duties including teacher paperwork was the next area of least satisfaction. Likewise, teachers were asked their views on changes that possibly would help improve Delaware's teacher retention and recruitment issue. Reducing non-teaching duties was indicated by 72% of the current teachers as a suggestion that would "help a lot".

The Delaware Educational Productivity Committee is currently studying several areas of Delaware educational productivity. This committee requested that the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Division of the Delaware State Department of Public Instruction conduct a survey of teacher paperwork because specific information about the paperwork burden was not available.

The purpose of this document is to provide results from the paperwork study, based on a survey of 58 voluntcer teachers, conducted during November 1986 in four Delaware school districts.

Major analyses of teacher paperwork that are reported are:

- The nature of the various types of paperwork and how long did it take to complete them.
- The source of paperwork, i.e. is the paperwork generated from within the classroom or does it comes to the teacher from an outside source.
- The level of difficulty of the paperwork, i.e. is clerical or professional judgment needed to complete the paperwork.
- The type of school (elementary, middle, high school) as it relates to the quantity and type of paperwork.
- The relation between the school subject taught and the quantity and type of paperwork.

It is anticipated that results from this survey will provide Delaware policy makers with information needed to make knowledgeable decisions about the scope and burden of teacher paperwork.

Purpose Of The Study

It has long been assumed (and often voiced) that excessive teacher paperwork and non-teaching chores have prevented teachers from their primary task - teaching. However, current educational literature does not define teacher paperwork or quantify the degree of the paperwork burden. Most research has involved opinion surveys which asked teachers to identify the teaching areas which are most dissatisfying. Although not defined, "paperwork" is invariably mentioned by teachers as a major source of dissatisfaction. This perceived dissatisfaction with paperwork could exacerbate Delaware's anticipated crisis in teacher recruitment and retention by making teaching appear less attractive. Therefore, the purposes of this study were to examine in depth several unanswered question that past research has not clarified regarding the nature of teacher paperwork and to better understand the extent of the teacher paperwork burden so that specific information would be available for decision makers.

The scope of the study was over a seventeen (17) school day period during November 1986 and included data from fifty-eight (58) volunteer teachers who recorded their paperwork activities both during and after the normal school day. Keeping within the bounds of a paperwork definition (see Definition of Terms) teachers coded all their paperwork into 16 categorical types according to nature of the paperwork. They identified all paperwork, recorded the time it took to process, and determined the complexity of it. This study analyzed the variations of types, time, and complexity of paperwork.

Definition of Terms

Paperwork - work focusing on routine record-keeping, providing written comments about classroom activities and preparing lesson handouts. In the school setting record keeping includes school lunch reports such as attendance, special education, discipline, information requests, report cards, and student handouts. In this study paperwork does not include activities associated with the primary tasks of preparing and delivering lessons.

Within the Classroom Paperwork - paperwork that originates with the teacher.

Outside the Classroom Paperwork - paperwork that comes to the teacher from somewhere other than the classroom.

Log Forms - color coded forms on which the teacher recorded information about the nature of paperwork they processed, when they did it, time to process, etc.

Entry Number- a log form column used to consecutively number the entries.

Paperwork Activity - a description of the paperwork activity the teacher performed.

Category Code - 16 categories of the types of teacher paperwork performed were coded so that they could be easily recorded.

Required Paperwork - paperwork coming from outside the classroom was classified required or optional. Required paperwork means that which the teacher must perform as part of teaching duties.

Optional Paperwork - means that which the teacher decides whether to perform or not. It is not necessary or obligatory for the teacher to process this paperwork.

During School - paperwork that was processed during the district's official school day.

After School- paperwork that was processed after the official end of one school day or before the official beginning of the next.

Time to Complete - time it took the teacher to process a paperwork entry.

Level of Difficulty - a four level range to determine the complexity of the paperwork.

School Type -
- Elementary School - grades K-6
- Middle School - grades 6-9
- High School - grades 9-12

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

National Focus

In 1985 Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. conducted a national study of teacher attrition for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, New York. The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America interviewed, via telephone, 1,846 current and 500 former teachers from April through June 1985 to analyze among other questions, what caused them to leave. Included in the survey are: interviews with former teachers who have left the classroom within the last five years, their views of the teaching profession, their ideas for needed improvements, and their experiences while changing careers. One part of the survey dealt with what caused former teachers to leave.

> The main reasons why former teachers left teaching were poor salaries and poor working conditions. Sixty percent of former teachers cite poor salaries as the chief reason. Another 36% name poor working conditions as too much paperwork, too many non-teaching duties, and lack of input about their jobs. These are the same compelling reasons for leaving teaching mentioned most often by current teachers who are considering leaving teaching.

Current teachers who are considering leaving teaching "cite the same major themes as do former teachers, and they cite them in quite similar proportions. Thus, over 6 in 10 cite low salary and over 4 in 10 cite difficult working conditions." Paperwork is the chief element mentioned in the "difficult working conditions".

Currently education trends in America are focused on improving the quality of education and teaching. One area of emphasis in The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America was with time teachers spend on school work. Both former and current teachers "appear to be equally hard working; both groups [estimated that they] average about 50 hours per week on work-related responsibilities. And both groups [estimated that they] spend one-fifth to one-fourth of their work time on paperwork unrelated to their

chief duties". Of the total hours current teachers spent in an average week on school related responsibilities, an average of 13 hours was estimated to have been spent on paperwork, administrative and other tasks not directly related to teaching students. This is an average of 24% of the total work related hours.

Similar results were published in the November 14, 1986 edition of Education Daily. It reports that the Education Department's Center for Statistics has just conducted a study on American teachers and schools, ED TABS: The 1985 Public School Survey Early Tabulations. The survey "found that teachers [estimated that they] put in 50.4 hours per week with only 25.5 hours of that time spent in the classroom". The remainder of the time "is spent engaged in tasks unrelated to teaching or at home doing work they do not have time to finish at school, such as grading papers".

Another Metropolitan Life report, The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1985: Strengthening the Profession, examines teachers' opinions as to what must be done to improve the teaching profession. This report was based on the data from the Metropolitan Life survey (April-June 1985) see previous page. Many of the findings are alarming.

> "Half of all teachers (51%) currently teaching in American schools say they have seriously considered leaving the profession to enter some other occupation".
>
> "...more than one-quarter (27%) of all teachers in American schools say they are very or somewhat likely to leave teaching for a different occupation in the next five years".
>
> The main reasons why teachers consider leaving teaching are poor salaries and poor working conditions. Sixty-two percent of those who have considered leaving specifically cite low salaries as the main reason. Another 41% identify such poor working conditions as too much paperwork, too many non-teaching duties, the physical environment at their schools, overcrowding, and long hours.

In addition, the January 1986 issue of Principal magazine included selected findings from a report conducted by the Educational Research Service, Teacher Opinions and Status. In May 1985 one out of every 700 public school teachers was polled; 1,346 responded. One of the Educational Research Service findings corroborates the other studies:

> "The three factors most commonly designated as a major problem were too much paperwork (47.4%), low salary level (45.8%), and lack of concern/support from parents of students (40.8%)".

A Current North Carolina Study

Researchers from North Carolina's educational and private sectors are collaborating under the direction of the Public School Forum to study and document school working conditions, the status of the teaching profession, and the "excessive burden of paperwork". Although not ready for publication until the spring of 1987, their research The Condition of Being An Educator parallels this Delaware paperwork project in several ways: five North Carolina school districts will be used; all participants are volunteers; and time during and after the working day will be monitored. The survey period is four weeks during the fall of 1986. The study will analyze the type and degree of paperwork and the variation in paperwork in elementary and secondary schools.

Delaware Studies

In September, 1986 the Christina School District conducted an opinion survey of over 1000 professional staff requesting their opinions on a variety of issues that related to developing a teacher incentive program; 623 responded. Seventy percent of the respondents felt that reducing the non-instructional responsibilities of professional educators would be a "great help". The amount of time spent on clerical duties (typing, duplication of materials, etc.) was an area where 68% reported being "dissatisfied" or

"very dissatisfied". Fifty-eight percent also were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with the amount of time they spend on school work after regular working hours. And, 69% were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with the amount of time they spend on non-instructional duties. Seventy-two percent were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with the salary they receive.

Results of an opinion survey conducted by Dr. Jeff Raffel of the University of Delaware's College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy were published in 1985 in Teaching in Delaware: An Analysis of Current and Former Teachers' Views. Major sources of dissatisfaction reported by 478 teachers in that study included salary and the amount of time spent on record-keeping and clerical duties. Dissatisfaction with salary was indicated by 70% of the teachers. Dissatisfaction with clerical duties and record-keeping was indicated by 71% of the teachers. When asked about areas that would "help a lot" to improve recruitment and retention in Delaware, over three-quarters felt that salaries should be made comparable to professions requiring similar training. Reducing time spent on non-teaching duties including paperwork was the next most popular change - 72% of the respondents thought this change would "help a lot".

Summary

In summarizing the seven cited sources, similarities are evident. The research has been based on mail and telephone surveys which ask for opinions and/or time estimates related to teacher paperwork. The two major complaints from teachers are (1) salary and (2) too much paperwork and clerical duties.

Comparing the two Delaware research studies with the national studies, parallel responses surface with salary and clerical duties as the two areas of major dissatisfaction and with similar percentages of dissatisfaction. The research mentions teacher paperwork but does not include a definition of the term or an analysis of the types of paperwork, the actual time involved, or the complexity of the paperwork.

METHODS

Procedures For The Survey

In order to objectively address the subject of teacher paperwork it was first necessary to define the term. Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines paperwork as "routine clerical or record-keeping work often incidental to a more important task, work involving the handling of reports, letters, forms". For the purpose of this project, paperwork is operationally defined as *work focusing on routine record-keeping, providing written comments about classroom activities and preparing lesson handouts*. In the school setting, record keeping includes school level reports such as, attendance, special education, discipline, information requests, report cards, and student handouts. In this study paperwork does not include activities associated with the primary tasks of preparing and delivering lessons.

Paperwork Log Forms

After defining paperwork, the next step was to develop a paperwork log form for the teachers to record information about the paperwork they processed. To facilitate record keeping, the log forms were color coded to separate paperwork generated from within the classroom and paperwork originating outside the classroom. In addition to basic information such as date, name of teacher and school, the log forms included Entry Number, Paperwork Activity, Code Number, Required/Optional, Completed During/After School, Time to Complete, Level of Difficulty.

The Entry Number was included.

The Paperwork Activity space was for a description of the paperwork activity. Teachers were asked to use verbs to explain what was done, not just the name of the paperwork.

Category Code descriptors were written for the two basic types of paperwork. An effort was made to include all category types the teacher would encounter. Categories were determined during the field testing of the forms. However, an "Other" category code number was included for any miscellaneous paperwork that couldn't be categorized otherwise.

The Required/Optional column is found only on the outside the classroom log forms. Although most paperwork coming to a teacher from outside the classroom could probably be termed required, it seemed necessary to include a Required/Optional column. It was decided that a teacher must consider all activities within the classroom to be necessary (required) for effective teaching or they would not be a part of the classroom procedure.

Completed During/After School columns were provided to indicate when the paperwork was completed. During School included paperwork handled during the district's official time of the school day. After School included paperwork handled between the official end of one school day and the official beginning of the next school day, morning, evening or weekend.

The Time to Complete was the time it took the teacher to complete the specific paperwork. It was requested that the time be recorded in minutes.

The purpose of inquiring about the Level of Difficulty was to determine the complexity of the paperwork (based on the degree of teacher judgment required) and the quantity of paperwork that could be completed by support staff and by professional staff. Levels 1 and 2 included paperwork that support staff could complete. However, levels 3 and 4 require professional judgment.

Field Testing

These log forms were then field tested with six teachers for a one week period. Afterward, a meeting was held with each teacher to discuss problems that arose and suggestions to improve wording of directions or category code descriptors. This led to a revision of the original log forms.

Data Analysis Procedure

The log sheets from the 58 teachers were coded for teacher and school prior to the 3893 individual paperwork activities (records) being key entered. A data set was created by using System 1032, database management software on the Digital Vax computer. Each record included 19 characters.

The data set was reviewed for obvious data errors and inconsistencies; these were subsequently corrected and the System 1032 data set was "dumped" to a Vax file for data analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS-X, was used to analyze the data for the report.

Sample Selection

An attempt was made to select a total of 100 teachers with the following composition from each district: one teacher in kindergarten, five teachers in grades 1-3, five teachers in grades 4-6, five teachers in grades 7-8, nine teachers in grades 9-12. Selection also attempted to include one English and one special education teacher in each grade level group with a minimum of two English teachers in the high schools.

The four participating districts in the survey were randomly chosen with two from New Castle County, one from Kent County, and one from Sussex County. In order to assure that the desired grade levels and subjects were represented in the survey, a stratified sample was randomly selected from the Department of Public Instruction personnel lists.

The superintendents of the four districts in the sample were contacted by phone. The scope and objectives of the survey were explained and the district schools needed for the project were noted. All superintendents agreed to have their districts participate. Letters were then sent to the principals explaining the project and including a list of randomly selected teachers and alternates. Principals were asked to contact those teachers to determine if

they would volunteer to participate in this survey and further, to ask them to be present at a meeting to be held in the local schools. The letters were followed with telephone calls to the principals verifying the time and place of the meeting and obtaining a final list of teachers who chose to participate.

Because of the wide variety of school dismissal times, it was necessary to hold eight orientation meetings. At these meetings with the participating teachers the project was explained and directions for completing and returning the log forms were given. Each teacher was given a packet which included a cover letter, definition of paperwork, a supply of log forms, sample copies of completed log forms, and instruction sheets for completing the log forms.

The study commenced with 90 teachers agreeing to participate; however, only 58 teachers completed the study by providing usable data. Six additional teachers submitted log forms that were either incomplete or were too late to be included in the data analysis.

The schools that participated in the survey are listed below.

Cape Henlopen School Dist.(Sussex Cty.)
- Rehoboth Elementary School
- Rehoboth Junior High School
- Cape Henlopen High School

Smyrna School Dist. (Kent Cty.)
- Smyrna Kindergarten Center
- Smyrna Elementary School
- Smyrna Middle School
- Smyrna High School

Red Clay School Dist. (New Castle Cty.)
- Austin Baltz Elementary School
- Stanton Middle School
- John Dickinson High School

Colonial School Dist.(New Castle Cty.)
- Carrie Downie Elementary School
- George Read Middle School
- William Penn High School

Profile of the Respondents

The 58 participants are partitioned below by grade and subject taught.

Grades	Subject Taught									Total No. Of Teachers
	Music	Kinder-garten	Gen. Elem.	English/ Lang. Arts	Math	Science	Soc. St.	Sp. Ed.	Voc.	
Elementary (Gr. K-6)	1	4	14	2				5		26
Middle (Gr. 6-9)				3	1	1	2	3		10
High (Gr. 9-12				9	3	2	2	1	5	22
Totals	1	4	14	14	4	3	4	9	5	58

PART II

FINDINGS

This part of the paperwork study identifies and interprets the data received from 58 teachers who recorded and coded all their paperwork activities during the 17 day data collection period.

Major analysis considerations focused on type of paperwork, origin, time, difficulty, school type, and subject taught. The paperwork findings are presented under the following headings:

- Representative examples of the wide diversity of teacher paperwork activities.
- Major types of teacher paperwork and those types that consume the most time.
- Where teacher paperwork originates i.e., with the teacher or from an outside source and the time associated. In addition, the proportion of time spent on more difficult and less difficult paperwork tasks is also reviewed.
- When the paperwork is done i.e. during or after the school day and the difficulty level of paperwork performed during these time periods.
- The most and least difficult types of paperwork in relation to school type.
- The variation of time spent and difficulty level of paperwork by school type.
- An analysis of the paperwork burden associated with three selected school subjects.
- Conclusions.
- Implications.

Representative Examples of Paperwork

The 58 teachers logged 3893 entries under the following types of paperwork during the 17 day period in the (November 1986) study period. Perhaps the best introduction to the type and breadth of paperwork that teachers do is to review a number of representative examples of paperwork types that teachers reported:

Teacher Paperwork Types From Within the Classroom	Teacher Paperwork Types From Outside the Classroom
Code	Code
01. Test Development	21. Passes
02. Evaluation/Grading	22. Special Education Related
03. Student Homework	23. Report Cards
04. Student Classwork	24. Discipline
05. Discipline	25. School Level Communications
06. Correspondence Within School	26. Responding To Parent/Guardian
07. Correspondence With Parents/Guardian	27. Special Projects
08. Requests	28. Other
09. Other	

Paperwork From Within the Classroom.

01 Test Development. Prepared reading vocabulary quiz, science essay and vocabulary test, reading comprehensive test, skillmasters, library skills test, unit test, multiple choice science test, make-up noun quiz, "synonym" quiz; typed history test, social studies test; evaluated physics projects, English short story projects.

02 Evaluation/Grading. Graded chapter tests, reading magazine tests, social studies projects, book reports, unit tests, themes; recorded reading test grades, unit grades; corrected Thanksgiving paragraphs, spelling quizzes; filled out daily logs of student grades.

03 Homework. Checked chapter 2 exercises, three classes of spelling homework; recorded homework grades; typed reading vocabulary worksheets, homework assignment sheet for 9 week period; prepared homework worksheet, crossword worksheet, questions on short story unit.

04 Student Classwork. Prepared math work sheet for seat work, social studies study guide, workshcet transparencies, library information ditto; filled out weekly report of student classwork; collated and stapled worksheets, math puzzles; typed social studies study guide, history unit study guide; corrected classwork spelling, vocabulary seatwork puzzles; xeroxed "Tall Tale" and "Volcano" worksheets, reading comprehension worksheets.

05 Discipline. Wrote student behavior chart, detention notice, discipline referral notice.

06 Correspondence Within the School. Wrote attendance slips, announcement for bulletin, congratulatory note to student of the month, list of cheerleaders for guidance office and nurse, student passes to clinic, pass to office, report for principal about a failing student, lunch count; filled out student performance report on failing student for guidance office, guidance referral form; sent two memos to grade partner, weekly slips about student performance.

07 Correspondence With Parents/Guardians. Wrote homework assignments for sick child, student evaluation report for conference, notes for guidance counselor after parent conference, unsatisfactory performance report; sent note about incomplete work, conference memos to parents, invitations for parent visits during National School Lunch Week.

08 Requests. Wrote request for carpet squares for kindergarten children, for department meeting, for principal's assistance on a problem, for field trip to Franklin Mint, for films for new unit.

09 Other Filled out student award certificates; collated and stapled weekly student papers.

Paperwork From Outside the Classroom.

21 Passes. Signed pass for student to go to guidance office, pass from nurse for student to take hearing tests, early dismissal pass, driver's education pass, office pass to principal's office, school psychologist pass, library pass for research, absence excuse pass, pass for student to take make-up test.

22 Special Education Related. Wrote IEP's, comments on front of IEP page, IEP for new student, IEP cover sheets and objectives; prepared notes for meeting with special education chairman, notice for IEP meeting, note to counselor for rescheduling of special education students; filled out student behavior observation forms, forms from psychometrist, paperwork for Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale for two students.

23 Report Cards. Averaged first marking period grades; recorded marking period grades on report cards, attendance on report cards; filled out report card information for data services, teacher comments on report cards; prepared report card information i.e. student name, school, grade, etc.

24 Discipline. Wrote student behavior record request from discipline office, detention record for guidance office; responded to discipline referral.

25 School Level Communications. Wrote student evaluation for guidance counselor, response memo to department chairman, response memo to teacher about student's grades, response to speech pathologist, note to principal's request; filled out form for student reassignment to new study hall, tardy sheets, book order, student locker records, computer questionnaire to district office, withdrawal form; prepared honor roll list for Honor Society advisor; revised and submitted conference list.

26 Responding to Parents/Guardians. Wrote memo to parent requesting homework assignments for hospitalized student; answered parent request about student grades; prepared student behavior progress report requested by parents.

27 Special Projects. Filled out paperwork project log form; prepared form for promotion committee, information for student essay contest; wrote suggestions in response to request from district grading committee, response to requests for school trip chaperone, lunch sticker program papers, Thanksgiving class project, flyers for school craft show.

28 Other. Wrote response memo to junior high teacher involving my students, field trip permission slips; recorded picture money information, names for PTO fund raiser; prepared work for substitute teacher; scheduled group club pictures.

Major Types of Paperwork

The wide diversity of teacher paperwork was classified by the teachers into 16 broad categorical types, as noted above. The major types of paperwork were determined by calculating the paperwork time burden for each of the 16 categories. The 58 teachers in the study reported a total of 1600 hours of paperwork burden. This averaged 8 hours and 6 minutes per week per teacher.

The seven most time consuming types of paperwork are presented in Table 1, Major Types of Paperwork: Average and Maximum Hours Per Week Per Teacher. These seven types accounted for 6 hours and 34 minutes per week per teacher, 81% of the average teacher's paperwork time burden.

Table 1
Major Types of Paperwork:
Average and Maximum Hours Per Week Per Teacher

Paperwork Type	Average Hrs/Wk/Teacher	Maximum Hrs/Wk/Teacher
Classwork	1 Hr. 51 Min.	8 Hrs. 25 Min.
Evaluation/Grading	1 Hr. 41 Min.	8 Hrs. 45 Min.
Homework	58 Min.	5 Hrs. 13 Min.
Report Cards	40 Min.	1 Hr. 51 Min.
Special Projects	37 Min.	1 Hr. 57 Min.
Test Development	26 Min.	2 Hrs. 33 Min.
Correspondence Within School	21 Min.	3 Hrs. 25 Min.
All Types	6 Hrs. 34 Min.	

Just as there was a great diversity of types of teacher paperwork, so was there a diversity of time reported for the paperwork tasks. The diversity can be inferred from the difference between the average and maximum hours per week per teacher on Table 1.

Further review of Table 1 shows that the greatest time burden is associated with three types of paperwork that directly relate to instruction: "classwork," "evaluation/grading," and "homework". These three account for 4 hours and 30 minutes per week per teacher, over one-half of the total paperwork time burden!

Origin of the Paperwork

One way of analyzing teacher paperwork activities is to determine who originates the paperwork, teachers or someone other than teachers. To accomplish this analysis, teachers coded each paperwork task as to its origin: (1) teacher originated paperwork tasks such as preparing quizzes, grading tests, preparing worksheets and issuing hall passes or (2) paperwork which did not originate with the teacher, tasks such as responding to parents, completing report cards, daily attendance and lunch counts.

Teacher originated paperwork is by far the more time consuming, on the average 5 hours and 46 minutes per week per teacher. This amounted to 71% of the weekly paperwork time burden. Table 2, Origin of Teacher Paperwork: Average and Range of Hours Per Week Per Teacher and Difficulty, presents the data about the origin of paperwork and the associated difficulty.

Teachers generally complain about the routine paperwork that they must do and how much time this paperwork "steals" from the school day. The data on Table 2 show that the average teacher spends 2 hours and 20 minutes per week on paperwork that originates within the school, district or with parents and

comes to the teacher. This amounts to approximately one-half of an hour per teacher per day, the equivalent of less than one period per day.

Table 2
Origin of Teacher Paperwork: Average and Range of Hours Per Week Per Teacher and Difficulty

Origin	Average Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Range Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Percent of Time	
			Less Difficult (Clerical)	More Difficult (Professional)
Teacher Originated Paperwork	5 Hrs. 46 Min.	11 Min. to 11 Hrs. 45 Min.	32.7%	67.3%
School, District, or Parent Originated Paperwork	2 Hrs. 20 Min.	1 Min. to 7 Hrs. 17 Min.	30.1%	69.9%
Total	8 Hrs. 6 Min.			

When Paperwork Is Done

Survey research has consistently documented that teachers spend time on paperwork in the evenings and on weekends. This study was also concerned about when the paperwork was addressed. Therefore, each item of paperwork was coded as (1) done during the normal school day or (2) done outside the normal school day. The data on Table 3, When Paperwork Is Done: Average and Range of Hours Per Week Per Teacher and Difficulty, show that the time spent on paperwork is evenly divided between during the school day and outside the school day, approximately 4 hours per week per teacher on each. The range of time per teacher, again, shows great variance across the teachers in the amount of time spent per week - a few minutes to over 13 hours per week.

Table 3
When Paperwork Is Done: Average and Range of
Hours Per Week Per Teacher and Difficulty

When	Average Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Range Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Percent of Time	
			Less Difficult (Clerical)	More Difficult (Professional)
During The School Day	3 Hrs. 56 Min.	6 Min. to 13 Hrs. 29 Min.	39.5%	60.5%
After The School Day	4 Hrs. 10 Min.	7 Min. to 13 Hrs. 16 Min.	24.7%	75.3%
Total	8 Hrs. 6 Min.			

The second dimension of the paperwork burden, "difficulty", is also presented in Table 3. Approximately 40% of teacher paperwork time during the normal school day is spent on routine or clerical paperwork. Whereas, in the evenings and weekends only one-quarter of the time is spent on routine or clerical paperwork. Hence, a greater proportion of the time spent on difficult paperwork is spent after the normal school day.

The time spent on paperwork during the school day may be put into perspective by determining the proportion of the school day that is devoted to paperwork. The weekly average of 3 hours 56 minutes when divided by 5 days per week yields a daily average of 47 minutes per day devoted to paperwork during the normal school day. Similar calculation for after the school day yields an average of 50 minutes per day spent on paperwork after school hours. It must also be remembered that daily and weekly averages mask the day to day variance for paperwork time. For instance, when report cards are due, a teacher may spend the better part of several evenings calculating the myriad of grades while on other evenings little or no paperwork may be required.

Difficulty of Paperwork

Up to this point, the difficulty of paperwork has been associated with the proportion of time it took to complete the less difficult and more difficult paperwork tasks. However, a more straight forward index of relative difficulty was also computed, average difficulty. The average difficulty (from the 4 level scale) was computed for each type of paperwork. The average difficulty ranged from 1.98, "requests" (the easiest), to 3.44, "responding to parents" (the most difficult).

The difficulty of paperwork is of primary interest since difficulty relates to whether or not someone other than the teacher could assist with the paperwork burden. Obviously, paperwork that requires professional judgment (the more difficult paperwork) can not be relegated to non-professional staff. Table 4, Most and Least Difficult Types of Paperwork, shows the most and least difficult types of paperwork.

Table 4
Most and Least Difficult Types of Paperwork

Type of Paperwork	Average Difficulty	Average Difficulty		
		Elementary	Middle	High School
Most Difficult				
Responding to Parents	3.44	3.43	3.65	3.30
Special Education	3.36	3.75	3.67	3.18
Discipline	3.04	3.47	3.36	2.64
Corresponding With Parents	2.97	2.93	3.52	2.36
Least Difficult				
Requests	1.98	1.69	2.52	2.50
Correspondence Within School	2.01	1.95	2.25	1.95
Student Passes	2.07	2.22	2.25	1.88
All Types	2.61			

The four most difficult types of paperwork were (1) responding to parents, (2) special education related, (3) discipline within school and (4) correspondence with parents. The average difficulty ratings for these ranged from 2.97 to 3.44 on the 4 level scale. Across school types there was general agreement about the difficulty of these types of paperwork.

The three least difficult types of paperwork were (1) requests, (2) correspondence within school and (3) passes. These three types are routine kinds of paperwork that occur in all school types.

Summarizing the difficulty ratings for a class of tasks such as "responding to parents", the most difficult type of paperwork according to the teacher rating (paperwork that generally requires professional judgment), is complex. The complexity can be seen by reviewing the data for this paperwork task. The average rating was 3.44 on the 4 point difficulty scale. The average rating by school type ranged from 3.30, from high school teachers, to 3.65, from middle school teachers, a range of about one-third of a point - a reasonably close response. However, when the individual teacher's ratings are reviewed for this type of paperwork, the actual range of ratings is 1 to 4, all possible choices. Obviously, most teachers considered "responding to parents" to be a very difficult task, hence, the 3.44 average difficulty. But, a few other teachers viewed it as a routine clerical task, difficulty levels 1 and 2. This variance in the difficulty ratings across teachers can be seen in a number of the types of paperwork. The following six types of paperwork logged the full range of ratings, 1 to 4: "special education," "discipline," "correspondence with parents," "passes" and "report cards".

Paperwork and School Type

The amount of time that teachers spend on paperwork varies greatly across the teachers in the study - a few minutes per week to over 13 hours per week.

A correlative question, is there a difference in the amount of time spent on paperwork across school types, elementary, middle, or high schools, was addressed by this study. Table 5, Paperwork Time and Difficulty by School Type, presents data that show that elementary teachers spend more time per week on paperwork than do middle or high school teachers. The elementary teachers spend, on the average, one and one-half hours more per week (8 hours 52 minutes) on the paperwork burden than do their high school counterparts (7 hours 19 minutes).

Table 5
Paperwork Time and Difficulty by School Type

School Type	Average Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Percent of Time	
		Less Difficult (Clerical)	More Difficult (Professional)
Elementary School	8 Hrs. 52 Min.	35.2%	64.8%
Middle School	7 Hrs. 55 Min.	21.5%	78.5%
High School	7 Hrs. 19 Min.	32.3%	67.7%
Total	8 Hrs. 6 Min.		

The proportion of time spent on the more difficult and less difficult paperwork is also presented in Table 5. Elementary and high school teachers expend roughly equivalent proportions of their paperwork time on the less difficult, routine or clerical paperwork, 35% and 32% respectively. The middle school teachers indicated that only one-fifth of their paperwork time was spent on routine, clerical paperwork. On the average, professional judgment is required for two-thirds to three-quarters of the time devoted to paperwork.

Another aspect of interest was the question: does the type of paperwork differ across school types. Three rather time consuming types of paperwork emerge from the analysis of this question: (1) evaluation/grading, (2) classwork related and (3) homework-related. These three types account for over one-half of the time devoted to paperwork, regardless of school type. Table 6, Paperwork Type by School Type, shows an interesting pattern when the average hours per week per teacher is reviewed by school type and paperwork type. The differences across school types are quite consistent with common sense expectations. Time spent on "evaluation/grading" paperwork increases while time spent on paperwork related to homework decreases with grade level. "Classwork" related paperwork at middle and high school levels requires more time per week than it does at the elementary level.

Elementary teachers spend about three times as much time on "homework" related paperwork than they do on "evaluation/grading". This proportion is reversed for the high school teachers. The time proportion for middle school teachers shows a reasonably similar amount of time, 1 hour and twenty-one minutes to 1 hour and fifty-seven minutes across the three major types of paperwork.

Table 6
Paperwork Type by School Type

Paperwork Type	School Type: Elementary	Middle	High School
	Average Hrs./Wk/Teacher		
Evaluation/Grading	1 Hr. 7 Min.	1 Hr. 57 Min.	2 Hrs. 16 Min.
Classwork Related	41 Min.	1 Hr. 21 Min.	1 Hr. 8 Min.
Homework Related	2 Hrs. 55 Min.	1 Hr. 29 Min.	45 Min.
Subtotal	(4 Hrs. 43 Min.)	(4 Hrs. 47 Min.)	(4 Hrs. 8 Min.)
All Other Types Of Paperwork	4 Hrs. 9 Min.	3 Hrs. 8 Min.	3 Hrs. 11 Min.
Total	8 Hrs. 52 Min.	7 Hrs. 55 Min.	7 Hrs. 19 Min.

Paperwork and Subject Taught

Common sense suggests that the paperwork burden will not be the same for all teachers; therefore, all data in the study were coded to the subject taught. The 58 teachers represented 8 subjects. However, 41 teachers represented three major subject areas: 18 teachers from general elementary, 9 teachers from special education and 14 teachers from English language arts. These three subjects accounted for 71% of the teachers in the study. Consequently, only these three robust subject groups were analyzed.

Table 7, Major Types of Paperwork by Subject Taught, presents the average paperwork time burden per week per teacher by subject. The general elementary teacher, on the average, spends 1 hour and 30 minutes more per week than the average of all teachers in the study and 2 hours 12 minutes more per week than special education teachers.

From Table 7 it can also be inferred that 5 types of paperwork amounted to 7 hours 4 minutes per week per general elementary teacher; 6 types of paperwork amounted to 7 hours 25 minutes per week per special education teachers; and 7 types of paperwork amounted to 7 hours 6 minutes per week per English language arts teachers. The largest amounts of time for general elementary and English language arts teachers were recorded for two types of paperwork: "classwork" and "evaluation/grading". The special education teachers' two most time consuming types of paperwork were "classwork", same as the other subject areas, and "special education" related paperwork, an expected type of paperwork for special education teachers.

Table 7
Major Types of Paperwork by Subject Taught

Paperwork	Subject Taught: General Elementary Average Hrs./Wk./Teacher	Special Education Average Hrs./Wk./Teacher	English - Language Arts Average Hrs./Wk./Teacher
Classwork	3 Hrs. 9 Min.	2 Hrs. 22 Min.	1 Hr. 16 Min.
Evaluation/Grading	1 Hr. 22 Min.	37 Min.	2 Hrs. 33 Min.
Special Projects	53 Min.	-	30 Min.
Report Cards	52 Min.	35 Min.	33 Min.
Homework	48 Min.	28 Min.	1 Hr. 5 Min.
Special Education Related	-	1 Hr. 6 Min.	-
Responding To Parents	-	37 Min.	-
Test Development	-	-	43 Min.
Correspondence With School	-	-	26 Min.
All Other Types of Paperwork	2 Hrs. 33 Min.	1 Hr. 40 Min.	1 Hr. 17 Min.
Total	9 Hrs. 37 Min.	7 Hrs. 25 Min.	8 Hrs. 23 Min.

The amount of paperwork time that each of the three subject area groups spend on less difficult and more difficult paperwork is presented on Table 8, Difficulty of Paperwork by Subject Taught. The data indicate that, on the average, general elementary teachers spend 5 hours 53 minutes per week per teacher on paperwork that is more difficult, that which requires professional judgment. Similar computations for special education and English language arts teachers show 5 hours 25 minutes and 5 hours 46 minutes per week per teacher respectively. Teachers from the three subject groups spend 5 hours 30 minutes to 6 hours per week on more difficult paperwork. Therefore, there is little difference in the paperwork time burden when the more difficult paperwork tasks are analyzed.

The case is quite different when the less difficult paperwork tasks are analyzed. Table 8 shows a range of 3 hours 34 minutes for general elementary to 2 hours per week for special education teachers. Therefore, it is quite clear that general elementary teachers spend more time per week on routine

clerical paperwork (up to one to 1 hour 30 minutes per week more) than the other two groups of subject area teachers.

Table 8
Difficulty of Paperwork by Subject Taught

Difficulty	Subject Taught: General Elementary	Special Education	English Language Arts
	Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Hrs./Wk/Teacher	Hrs./Wk/Teacher
Less Difficult (Levels 1 & 2) (Clerical)	3 Hrs. 34 Min.	2 Hrs.	2 Hrs. 37 Min.
More Difficult (Levels 3 & 4) (Professional)	5 Hrs. 53 Min.	5 Hrs. 25 Min.	5 Hrs. 46 Min.
Total	9 Hrs. 37 Min.	7 Hrs. 25 Min.	8 Hrs. 23 Min.

The relative proportion of time spent on less and more difficult paperwork (based on Table 8 data) is shown in Figure 1, Proportion of Paperwork Time by Difficulty by Subject.

Figure 1
Proportion of Paperwork Time by Difficulty by Subject Taught

CONCLUSIONS

1. Teacher paperwork includes a great variety of activities. Over 200 different activities were reported under the 16 categorical types of paperwork. The diversity is exemplified by the following examples: prepared synonym quiz, collated and stapled worksheets, completed guidance referral form, completed lunch count, completed Honor Roll list, recorded picture money, checked list for PTO, developed IEP for new student, wrote to parent about homework for a sick child, averaged grades for report cards, filled out book order and wrote absence excuses.

2. Time spent on paperwork appears to be idiosyncratic with the teacher. One teacher reported spending only one hour per week on paperwork while another teacher reported over seventeen hours per week during the study period. On the average, teachers are spending eight hours per week on paperwork.

3. Seven major types of paperwork account for over 80% of the time spent on paperwork, 6 hours 34 minutes per week per teacher. The seven major types are:

   - Classwork
   - Evaluation/Grading
   - Homework
   - Report Cards
   - Special Projects
   - Test Development
   - Correspondence Within School

4. Paperwork directly related to instruction (classwork, evaluation/grading, and homework) accounts for the majority of teacher paperwork time.

5. Teachers spend over two-thirds of their paperwork time doing their own paperwork to support their instruction, 5 hours 46 minutes per week per teacher.

6. Teachers spend approximately 4 hours per week during the school day doing paperwork. Forty percent of this time is associated with routine, clerical paperwork.

7. Teachers spend approximately 4 hours per week after the normal school day doing paperwork. One quarter of this time is associated with routine, clerical paperwork.

8. Teachers rated "responding to parents", "special education", "discipline" and "corresponding with parents" as the most difficult types of paperwork; these require the most professional judgment.

9. Teachers rated "requests," "correspondence within the school" and "student passes" as the least difficult types of paperwork; these are routine, clerical in nature.

10. Elementary school teachers spend approximately one hour more per week on paperwork than their middle or high school counterparts.

11. Elementary school teachers spend four times as much time on paperwork related to "homework" than high school teachers. However, high school teachers spend twice as much time on "evaluation/grading" as do their elementary counterparts.

12. General elementary teachers spend 1 hour 30 minutes per week more doing on paperwork than the average teacher in this study.

13. When three subjects were analyzed (general elementary, special education and English language arts) it was evident that the general elementary teachers spend more time per week on routine clerical paperwork than teachers of other subjects - up to one and one half hours more per week. On the other hand, teachers from all three subjects spend approximately equal amounts of time on the more difficult paperwork tasks.

IMPLICATIONS

Often the simplest questions are really the most complex. For instance, the question "Is there too much teacher paperwork?" appears to be quite straightforward. However, when one probes this simple interrogative it quickly becomes clear that the question, which seems to beg for a simple yes or no answer, is actually rooted in a value judgment: How much paperwork is enough or conversely, too much? This study documented the nature of teacher paperwork and determined the time burden of this paperwork. The information provides an objective basis for discussions about how much paperwork is too much paperwork.

Even though the simple question is left unanswered, information from the study does suggest a number of implications related to teacher paperwork:

1. A reduction in teacher paperwork time may result from a careful review and screening of paperwork that originates with the school or school district. This paperwork and associated procedures could be periodically reviewed to assure that (1) the information is necessary and (2) teachers are the most appropriate suppliers of the information.

2. The literature is replete with documentation supporting the conclusion that teachers believe that they have too much paperwork. Since the majority of teacher paperwork (originated by the teachers) is directly associated with and in support of teaching, and if the paperwork burden is to be reduced, teachers need to closely review their own paperwork to ascertain it's contribution to teaching and learning and, where possible, streamline their classroom paperwork.

3. If reducing teacher paperwork were to become an initiative and if providing clerical assistance were the selected strategy, it seems that only a minor reduction in teacher paperwork burden could be expected. This is predicated on two understandings (1) only one-third of the paperwork time is routine and clerical in nature (candidate for clerical assistance) and (2) a significant portion of the routine clerical paperwork is inextricably associated with teaching as we know it (structural paperwork) - lunch counts, daily attendance, absence excuses and hall passes to mention a few types. The exception to this generalization is that general elementary teachers, since they spend more time than the average teacher on paperwork, may benefit more from clerical assistance.

4. Automated pupil information systems are implicated in any serious consideration of teacher paperwork. Since the basic unit of information in schools is associated with pupils and the lowest level of aggregated pupil information is the classroom, well planned and updated automated systems may be able to provide information in lieu of asking each classroom teacher for the information; this could reduce the paperwork burden. One caveat, however, is necessary: automated systems often require additional data burden for start-up and updating the information. These burdens must be considered, on balance, against the potential paperwork reductions and other associated benefits from automated pupil information systems.

5. Further study should be conducted to determine the differences in the teacher paperwork burden between grade level and subject taught. Data from this study suggest that there are differences. For instance, general elementary teachers appear to spend 2 hours per week more time on paperwork than the average special education teacher.

6. Opinion research has documented that teachers, after salary, cite paperwork, too many non-instructional duties and too little planning time as major areas of teacher dissatisfaction. This study documented the time burden and nature of teacher paperwork. However, if the larger area of teacher dissatisfaction is to be understood, other aspects about the condition of teaching need to be studied. For instance, hall duty, bus duty, lunch duty, recess duty, and planning time, which must be used for pupils making-up class work or taking missed tests, all detract from the instructional day and, consequently, contribute to teacher dissatisfaction.

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